



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
Executive Officer/Clerk
and Jury Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Robert Sherman
Deputy Executive Officer
(805) 654-2964

VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT ELECTS PRESIDING AND ASSISTANT PRESIDING JUDGES FOR 2005 and 2006

The Judges of the Ventura Superior Court have elected Judge John R. Smiley as Presiding Judge and Judge Colleen Toy White as Assistant Presiding Judge for 2005 and 2006. The election was held during the Judges' weekly meeting on June 9th. The new term for both begins January 1, 2005.

Judge Smiley has served on the Ventura County bench for approximately 18 years. He was appointed to the Municipal Court by Governor Deukmejian in 1986 and elevated to the Superior Court in June 1998.

Judge Smiley has been the Superior Court Assistant Presiding Judge since January 2001 and Supervising Judge of the Family Law Division for the past seven years. He was the Municipal Court Presiding Judge in 1994 and 1995 and Municipal Court Assistant Presiding Judge in 1992 and 1993. In 2000, Judge Smiley was named Trial Judge of the Year by the Ventura County Trial Lawyers Association.

Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Smiley was a partner in the firm of Lucking, Bertelsen, Bysshe, Kuttler & Smiley in Ventura, where he practiced family and business law for 13 years. He is a graduate of Princeton University and Southwestern University School of Law. Judge Smiley has taught at the Ventura College of Law since 1986 and is a past instructor at the National Judicial College in Nevada.

Judge White was elected to the Superior Court in June 1994. She received a special appointment by Governor Wilson in October of that year so that she could take the bench before the start of her term in January 1995.

Judge White established the court's Pro Per Clinic which assists litigants representing themselves in the Family Law courts and the Dependency Drug Court that provides early intervention for newborns prenatally exposed to alcohol or drugs while strengthening the ability of families to care for their children. She is a former Supervising Judge of the Family Law Division, has served on numerous state and local committees and task forces, and has been an instructor for several Southern California colleges. She is the recipient of numerous awards for outstanding public service, leadership, and contributions to the legal system.

Prior to being elected to the bench, Judge White was a member of the Ventura County District Attorney's Office for 18 years, 10 of which were in the position of Chief Assistant District Attorney. Judge White is a graduate of the Ventura College of Law.

The Presiding Judge, with the assistance of the Court Executive Officer, is responsible for leading the court, establishing policies, and allocating resources in a manner that promotes equal access to justice, maximizes the use of judicial and other resources, increases efficiency in court operations, and enhances service to the public.

The Assistant Presiding Judge performs duties as assigned by the Presiding Judge, and in the absence of the Presiding Judge, exercises the powers of the Presiding Judge.

Judge Smiley and Judge White have expressed their commitment to continue the leadership role of the Ventura Superior Court among the trial courts of California and to continue the high quality of public service to the people of Ventura County.

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